

MINUTES
TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
14 September 2009

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:37 AM on Monday, 14 September 2009. Those members in attendance were Ms. Peggy Pickall - Chairperson, Mrs. Christine Dayton, Mr. Robert Arnouts and Mr. Steven K. Hack. Mrs. Polly Shannahan, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz and Mr. Eric Lowery were not present. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich, and Ms. Florence Ball.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 3 August MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting on 3 August 2009 were read. Since there were no corrections or additions, *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steven Hack and unanimously carried.*

B. UPDATES:

1. THE RETREAT (T-930) - Mr. Martin Sokolich said the property, known locally as *The Oaks*, which is located in Royal Oak, has recently changed ownership. The new owner, Chris Kleppinger, does not want to keep the house which is currently vacant. Clint Wadsworth, a contractor who resides in the area, would like to purchase and move the house which dates back to the early 1900's. Mr. Wadsworth told Mr. Sokolich that it would be at least a year before he could work things out to execute his plans, and he is hoping to obtain tax credits to defray some of the cost associated with the work. The house has two distinct parts: the original house and a later Victorian era addition. Mr. Wadsworth realizes that context is an issue. He wants to see if the house would be eligible for an historic district overlay after it is moved.

Ms. Peggy Pickall said the property is not currently protected by a Talbot County HDO and added that Ms. Kathleen Kurtz told her that she is not generally in favor of moving historic structures, but did not elaborate on her reasons. Mrs. Christine Dayton commented that with the Governor's budget cuts, funds available for tax credits have been reduced from ten million to five million dollars. Next year could see even more cuts. Ms. Peggy Pickall asked the Commissioners to be thinking about Mr. Wadsworth's proposal, adding that this could be a prime example in support of the

proposed Demolition Delay Ordinance when talking to Mike Pullen and Dirck Bartlett. It was also mentioned that the house, which is on a waterfront property, was once a bed and breakfast.

2. NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS FOR GEORGE BROOKS HOUSE (T-1120) – Ms. Peggy Pickall said, based on the information that she read from the MHT website which stated that this property is not recommended by the State for a National Register listing, her general opinion is that TCHPC cannot support Mr. Workman’s application to have it placed on the National Register of Historic Places. She said she is basing her decision not only on MHT’s opinion, but also in evaluation of contextual significance. The house is not associated with any significant historic figure or event. An historic person’s influence is expected to have lasting influence on a region or community in order to be considered an historic icon. Mr. Brooks’ influence was more on family; he did not contribute substantially to the community. Therefore, the contextual association is not strong enough to warrant a National listing. As the other Commissioners were in agreement, Ms. Pickall said she will write a letter to Will Workman telling him TCHPC cannot support his National Registry application, citing the aforementioned reasons.
3. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE – Mr. Robert Arnouts said to date, he has not received any word from Mike Pullen about the status of the proposed legislation. Ms. Peggy Pickall said she will send Mr. Pullen a quick note, mentioning the Retreat as an example of why this legislation would be an important tool to enhance and support preservation efforts in Talbot County, and why further delays in promoting this legislation must be avoided. Mr. Robert Arnouts suggested getting MHT to send a letter to Dirck Bartlett and Mike Pullen in support of the proposed ordinance.
4. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she attended Polly Shannahan’s award ceremony which was held on 11 September 2009 at 925 Port Street. She said Mrs. Shannahan seized the opportunity to “put in a plug for more money” to fund the efforts to preserve the house at 925 Port Street. Ms. Pickall said Rick Towle told her that until the Dept. of Parks and Recreation gets plans for the Port Street Waterfront Park underway, he cannot do much with the house, in terms of finding a use for it. His department, along with the other departments in the County, is currently under severe financial constraints due to the National economic crunch. Ms. Peggy Pickall wondered if TCHPC can find a temporary use for the building. Mrs. Christine Dayton asked whether just anyone can lease it, or must the use be in connection with the Dept. of Parks and Recreation. Ms. Pickall said she will ask Rick Towle.

Mr. Martin Sokolich said there is currently no electric meter, and quite a sum of money would need to be spent to get the house ready for anyone to occupy, and that the work recommended to stabilize the structure needs to be done prior to doing anything else with the building. Mr. Robert Arnouts said what TCHPC needs to do is begin the HDO process. Mrs. Christine Dayton said TCHPC needs to get Rick Towle to approve the process before the application can be submitted to Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Arnouts was dubious about Mr. Towle's intentions for the property. He felt Mr. Towle wants to delay things so the building deteriorates to the point where it must be demolished. Mrs. Christine Dayton countered Mr. Arnouts' opinion, saying she feels it is the financial aspect that is responsible for the delay. Mr. Arnouts confided, "on the whole, I am very frustrated with being a Commissioner because we never get County Council support, and, therefore, get nothing accomplished." He said, "if Rick Towle truly wants to save this historic building he should be doing everything he can to get the HDO on it since it would strengthen his case with the County Council and the preservation of the structure could then become eligible for grants." Mr. Martin Sokolich said Rick Towle is constrained by the requirements of Program Open Space.

Mr. Sokolich suggested sending Rick Towle a memo outlining TCHPC concerns and goals for the repair of the structure and complete the application so it is ready for him to sign. Mr. Arnouts recommended adding a note to the memo saying that the ball is in his court, and to let the Commission know when he is ready to get things moving. He said he felt TCHPC has carried this on their agenda too long without progress. He added that once his term is up, he wants to resign as Commissioner.

5. TCHPC GUIDELINES – Ms. Peggy Pickall asked whether anyone has done any work on writing the guidelines. Mrs. Christine Dayton said, "we only have the things Florence has sent us, and no one has had a chance to work on anything yet." Mr. Robert Arnouts said we have seen some good examples, but need something that covers County needs, and it should be as simple and straight forward as possible. He questioned why TCHPC needs to spend a lot of time and money on this endeavor. Mrs. Peggy Pickall said she feels the State wants TCHPC to have its own guidelines, and that it was strongly recommended by Susan Montgomery West, when she evaluated how TCHPC operates. Mr. Steven Hack said he felt that since the County only has a limited number of HDOs, it should be up to TCHPC as to whether it even needs a separate set of guidelines, since the Secretary of the Interior Standards are routinely used. Mr. Robert Arnouts and Mrs. Christine Dayton

said they do not feel TCHPC really needs guidelines. Mrs. Peggy Pickall said she found a short set of guidelines in the TCHPC Reference Binder that were done years ago by the Commission and she wondered if they would suffice. She has sent a copy to Susan West Montgomery to see if they are acceptable. The goals of guidelines were briefly discussed, commenting they are chiefly a tool to explain TCHPC procedures and rationale to the public.

6. TCHPC MISSION AND DUTIES – Ms. Peggy Pickall said a mission statement should be part of the guidelines, and the statement for TCHPC should emphasize promotion of historic preservation.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she has not heard anything from the County Council about a replacement for Polly Shannahan’s seat. She would like to present Mrs. Shannahan with her TCHPC award next month.

Since there were only four Commissioners present at today’s meeting, the election was postponed until a meeting is held where all Commission seats are filled and everyone is present.

- B. REVIEW OF §190-108 & §190-109 TCHPC ORDINANCE PHASE III REVISIONS – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she could not find any exception to anything in these sections of the Zoning Ordinance, but would like to see the definition of *viewshed* added, if it is not already in the definitions at the end of the Ordinance. Ms. Florence Ball said she will check and advise her whether it is in the definitions. If not, upon TCHPC approval of the one currently in place on one of the TCHPC application documents, she will forward it to Mary Kay Verdery for the Phase III amendments to the Ordinance that are currently being organized.
- C. LOG CANOE RECOGNITION – Ms. Peggy Pickall said all log canoes are listed on the National Register website, and that local recognition of their owners would be an appropriate use of TCHPC budget, since log canoe races are one of the biggest tourism draws in Talbot County. She recommended issuing framed certificates. She called for a motion to approve issuing the certificates.

MOTION – Mrs. Christine Dayton moved for TCHPC to have certificates prepared to show recognition of historic log canoes and celebrate 100 years of log canoe racing in Talbot County. Mr. Steven Hack seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

- D. WYE MILLS PROPOSED COMMERCIAL BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she sent a letter to Queen Anne’s County on behalf of TCHPC, citing concerns for impacts on the mill stream, the mill and the Old Wye Church. She said Queen Anne’s County is working in cooperation with Talbot County since part of Wye Mills is in Talbot County, and the other part is in Queen Anne’s County.
- E. SEPTEMBER SITE VISIT DESTINATION – Mr. Steven Hack said he has arranged a site visit at Wye House (T-54). Those attending should meet in the Acme Parking lot in Easton at 9:15 am on Monday, 21 September 2009.

Ms. Peggy Pickall said Martin Sokolich had an inquiry from the attorney for the estate of the recently deceased owner of Jena (T-163). The attorney said he was looking into the legal aspects of the HDO. In conversing with Martin, he said there may be a way to record a note about an HDO with the deed to an HDO property so it appears on a title search. It was discussed that it should be explored further, since it has always been a concern that HDO status is often not revealed to the new owners upon the sale of these properties.

IV. OPEN FLOOR

- A. Ms. Peggy Pickall said the owners of Bolton have ordered a plaque. They want to have “Bolton Farm” inscribed on it, however, “Bolton” has been the name of the property since the 1700’s. Mrs. Christine Dayton suggested asking Peg Keller. Various dates were discussed, however it was agreed that c.1830 would be the correct date to add to the plaque, unless further research reveals a different date.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 5 October 2009 at 9:30 am in the Bradley Room in the South Wing of the Courthouse.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:05 am.

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